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A SUBSTITUTE FOR WAR.

The cost alone, in mere dollars and cents, of maintaining the elements of war—leaving out of sight the dreadful waste of life, the destruction of property, the burnings, ravagings and sinkings to the bottom of the ocean—the mere cost of keeping up naval and military establishments is a fearful burden upon the industry of a nation. The British Parliament has voted eight millions sterling for the military service of the current year; ten millions for the naval service; and there are divers contingencies to be otherwise provided for, which will probably swell the aggregate of expenditures under this head to twenty millions sterling. Twenty millions—almost one-half of the entire British revenue, which varies from forty-eight to fifty-four millions—and this enormous sum of money, wrung from the toil and sufferings—from the very blood and bones, we may say—of the British people, to keep up an establishment of which the sole purpose is to spread havoc, wretchedness and death over the fair face of the Lord's creation!

But the question is, how can wars be avoided? A *practical, efficient, permanent substitute for war is the first want of the age*; for if such a thing could be devised, thousands and tens of thousands would become active and earnest advocates for unbroken peace who now content themselves with wishing. An idea prevails very extensively that war may sometimes be a necessary evil—to use the expression of the American, “an unavoidable and inexorable alternative.” But why should this belief be entertained? It is conceded that between individuals there is no possible mode or form of wrong, for the redress of which human wisdom under divine guidance has not provided a tribunal—a method, more or less adequate; and resort to that tribunal, that method, is recognized as a duty, universally imperative and binding. Why is it not so between nations?

The duel is practised by certain individuals, as a mode of adjusting quarrels of a certain nature. The number of duellists and of advocates for duelling, happily, is very small compared with that of all who denounce the practice as unchristian and absurd; especially absurd, because the issue of the duel, whatever it may be, affords no actual redress for the wrong, whatever that may have been.

Now, war is a duel between nations. Just as unchristian—more so indeed, because it has no discrimination in its vengeful and destructive fury, and its heaviest miseries are more often inflicted on the innocent than the guilty—as unchristian, as irrational, and a thousand times more hateful and horrid. Why, then, should the opponents of duelling, who maintain that in no case is single combat justifiable—why should they not with equal earnestness maintain that in no possible case is war justifiable between nations? The true ground for all to take is, that there is no such thing as an “unavoidable and inexorable alternative,” to wit, national war.

War has been so considered, because no completely efficient substitute for it has ever been devised. Could this be established, and universally recognized, then every body would see that necessity for war could not exist, and every body would lend a helping hand to put down war. What is wanted now, is a general conviction that efforts to put down war *could* be successful; that another and better resort is available in all possible cases of disagreement between nations.

The substitute hitherto proposed with most earnestness, and most apparent belief in its sufficiency, has been a resort to arbitration, stipulated for in solemn treaties, and entering into all diplomatic relations. But there are serious objections to this plan, foremost among which is the difficulty of agreeing upon an arbitrator with perfect confidence in his exemption from bias, either through particular interest in the matter of the dispute, or general predilection in favor of one or the other party. For instance, he might be suspected of unwillingness to displease a powerful sovereign or nation by an adverse decision; or he might cherish secret feelings of dislike to the political institutions of a party to the quarrel.

Why might not a HIGH COURT OF NATIONS be established? A Court sitting in permanence, and composed of Judges appointed by the different nations consenting to its establishment, each having the appointment of two, three, or more, as should be found expedient? Suppose Great Britain, France, Russia, Prussia, Austria and the United States should unite in the creation of such a tribunal, each contributing, say, three of its members. Here would be eighteen judges, the wisest and most upright men their respective nations could furnish, and forming a body of arbitrators in the integrity of whose judgments the utmost confidence might be placed. The particular interests or prejudices of any party litigant before this august tribunal, though they might weigh somewhat with three of the judges, could have no influence with the other fifteen; and the character of the men, if wisely chosen, would afford ample warrant against the existence of all baser motives to partiality. We throw out the idea, without dwelling on the details of the plan, for the consideration of all who long for the time when there shall be peace among nations, and wars and fightings shall for ever cease.

In reply to these just and forcible suggestions from the Editor of the N. Y. Commercial Advertiser, we would say, that the friends of peace, while in favor of arbitration as a stipulated substitute for war, have long urged the plan of a Congress of Nations as the *perfection* of all substitutes. We much prefer the latter, but recommend the former as a temporary, occasional expedient, until we can procure the other. We have published on this subject not only essays and pamphlets, but tracts and large volumes; and when *all* editors, or the greater part of them, will take and keep the noble stand of our friend in favor of a scheme at once so magnificent, so simple and so feasible, we shall then hope for speedy success.

NOT ON THE BATTLE FIELD.

—
BY JOHN PIERPONT.
—

"To fall on the battle-field fighting for my dear country—that would not be hard."
THE NEIGHBORS.

O no, no—let me lie
Not on a field of battle, when I die!
Let not the iron tread
Of the mad war-horse crush my helmed head:
Nor let the reeking knife,
That I have drawn against a brother's life,
Be in my hand when death
Thunders along, and tramples me beneath
His heavy squadron's heels,
Or gory fellows of his cannon's wheels.

From such a dying bed,
Though o'er it float the stripes of white and red,
And the bald eagle brings
The clustered stars upon his wide-spread wings,
To sparkle in my sight,
O, never let my spirit take her flight!

I know that beauty's eye
Is all the brighter where gay pennants fly,
And brazen helmets dance,
And sunshine flashes on the lifted lance:
I know that bards have sung,
And people shouted till the welkin rung
In honor of the brave
Who on the battle-field have found a grave.